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Wiki 1

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*Define “Action Research”.*

Action Research is essentially learning by doing. It is when one directly participates in the investigation of a particular problem. Action research is a process that works as a cycle. First, a problem is identified and data is gathered. This is followed by proposing a solution, then planning and taking action. Next, the actions are evaluated along with their results. The results may expose new problems/concerns, in which case the process of action research is repeated. In the field of education, action research is used to systematically examine educational practices, with the purpose of learning how they can be improved. “Action research is not about learning why we do certain things, but rather how we can do things better. It is about how we can change our instruction to impact students.” (Ferrance, 2000)

*Discuss a current educational issue/possible research topic that is of interest to you. Define the problem. Discuss the need for intervention. Is it researchable?*

Classroom management is a major concern of teachers. New York City public school classrooms often accommodate a minimum of 25 students with various learning abilities, needs, backgrounds, and personalities. A teacher’s ability to manage a classroom effectively plays a significant role in the academic progress of students, as well as their overall well-being. “Effective classroom management must be consistent and predictable: Any system a teacher uses must be consistent and predictable; every student should know exactly what will happen, given specific circumstances or behaviors, and they should know the same thing will happen, regardless of the specifics of time or individual.” (McGown, 2011)

Systems for managing behavior are of particular importance when it comes to dealing with students that are labeled with disruptive or aggressive behaviors, particularly when they are in inclusive general education classes. Oftentimes, it is those very students that are the ones most in need of effective disciplinary strategies. There are a variety of methods and procedures that have been implemented in schools at state and citywide levels to address this issue. However, it still poses a problem at the classroom level. Many teachers have their individual preferences about how to deal with challenging students, such as office referrals, suspensions, or detention. I am interested in what is the most effective strategy teachers can use to respond to students with challenging behaviors within the general education classroom.

There have been several large-scale, high-profile studies done on behavior management dating back as far as the 1970’s. In recent research, there are debates about whether teacher-monitored or student-monitored strategies work best. According to Shapiro and Cole, self-monitoring occurs when “children are instructed to observe specific aspects of their own behavior and provide an objective recording of these observations. Numerous studies have demonstrated that the activity of focusing attention on one’s own behavior and the subsequent self-recording of these observations may result in positive reactive effects or improvement in the behavior in the behavior being monitored” (p.7). The problem I am interested in is do student-monitored or teacher-monitored strategies work best for managing students with challenging behaviors. This is a researchable topic because different techniques can be tested on the behavior of samples of students.

*Prior Research:*

* Research on Self-Management Techniques Used by Students with Disabilities in General Education Settings: A Descriptive Review by Dennis McDougall

*Pros and Cons:*

*Pro:*

According to an article about self-monitored behavior management by Mary Anne Prater, “an increasing amount of research in the areas of self-monitoring and self-instruction demonstrates the effectiveness of these tools for students with learning and behavior difficulties, whether the students receive special education services or are considered at-risk. Teaching students to apply self-management procedures has been shown to improve student behavior and academic skills across special education and mainstream settings.” (Prater, 1994)

*Con:*

Most of the research conducted on this topic has been in special education classes. Therefore, there is not enough conclusive evidence that supports self-monitoring behavior strategies as a success in the general education classroom. According to an article in the Journal of Remedial and Special Education, “although more than 240 self-management studies have been published over the past 3 decades, only 14 of these studies have targeted students with disabilities in general education settings.” (McDougall, 1998)

*Current Instructional Strategies:*

* The Citywide Standards of Intervention and Discipline Measures (Discipline Code) describes in detail unacceptable behaviors and the variety of disciplinary measures that are used in NYC public schools. Guidance interventions, such as parent outreach, individual behavior contracts, intervention by counseling staff, etc. are currently used as instructional strategies.
* The New York State Education Department offers behavioral assessments and intervention plans that focus on providing positive behavior support.

*Practitioners/Theorists:*

* Jacob Kounin is a classroom behavior theorist who believes that teachers should combine learning and discipline in the classroom by preventing misbehaviors, maintaining focus and attention of whole class, and thorough lesson planning.
* Dr. William Glasser’s approach is that all behavior is controllable, and is therefore controlled internally rather than externally. His belief is that students are able to be managed without coercion.

*What is your proposed intervention?* *(Independent Variable)*

My proposed intervention is to teach students with challenging behaviors about self-monitoring procedures. First, they must know what the target behavior is and understand why not doing it is unacceptable. The independent variable would be the child’s self-assessment and self-recording of his/her behavior in an individualized behavior management notebook/ folder. Research shows that “66% of students with emotional/behavioral disorders in their [McQuillan and DuPaul] study responded more favorably to self-management strategies than to interventions imposed and controlled by teachers.” (Jolivette, Patton, Ramsey, 1996)

*How will you define (construct) and measure your intervention? (Dependent Variable)*

The intervention will be measured by tallying up the occurences of disruptive behaviors (talking out of turn, getting out of seat, showing aggression towards other students, etc.)

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